



## SUCCESS STORY

### Schoolchildren Empowered to Champion Home Water Treatment

**USAID-funded program helps schoolchildren acquire lifesaving habits for them and for the community**



Photo: Eva from RACOU MWENEDITU

Tatu (assumed name) is demonstrating home water treatment as he learned at school.

**USAID-funded behavior change communication activities, which have been conducted in schools, have helped many schoolchildren know the importance of drinking treated water to improve the health of their families and communities. From January to March for instance, 6,870 schoolchildren from 12 schools in Mweneditu were touched by these activities**

In order to implement USAID-funded activities for the prevention of water-borne diseases, PSI/ASF has partnered with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and associations to raise public awareness and help people acquire healthy behavior. Schoolchildren are also touched with these activities and act accordingly as evidenced by the following schoolboy's experience.

"My name is Tatu. I'm 14 years old and I study at the Oignon School in Mweneditu, Kasai Oriental Province, Democratic Republic of Congo. Where I live, access to water is very difficult. Since tap water is scarce, in order to have their water supplies families must go to water source, or draw water from private wells or collect rainwater. As the water we daily drank was of poor quality, my family and I, including all our neighbors, regularly suffered from belly pain and diarrhea. Consequently, I was away from school twice or three times a month. Unfortunately, my family hardly access quality care.

"Thankfully, our school was visited by a team of RACOU [a local NGO targeting the youth under the USAID-funded AIDSTAR project, which is being implemented by PSI/ASF]. My schoolmates and I learned from them that the untreated well water we usually drank was the cause of the illnesses we and our families suffered from. They told us that we should start treating our drinking water with PuR® (water purifier) and store it properly to avoid water-borne diseases. They also demonstrated how to use PuR®. Back home, I had hard time trying to pass on the information to my parents and our neighbors, all of them were arguing that the source has been supplying drinking water to the community for decades. As I had some PuR® sachets I received from the outreach workers, I convinced Mom to help me demonstrate their use in front of all people dwelling in our compound.

"From that demonstration on, my parents regularly and easily buy this product in Mweneditu's pharmacies or market since PSI/ASF ensures its availability in Mweneditu and in all the villages of the Luilu Territory. For a few months now, my family and I are no longer frequent victims of diarrhea. My brothers and I now regularly attend classes."